

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Chair of the House Rules Committee, today voiced her strong support for a one-time \$250 payment to Social Security beneficiaries in the wake of the Social Security Administration’s announcement today that there will be no automatic cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) in 2011.

“Security is a vital lifeline to so many Americans, including seniors and people living with disabilities who are struggling to make ends meet right now,” said Slaughter. “And with so many people still feeling the effects of this recession, it is important that we act swiftly to ensure that the lack of cost-of-living-adjustment will not jeopardize seniors’ ability to survive on their benefits. I look forward to working with my colleagues to get this assistance quickly to those that need it most.”

The COLA is automatically calculated using data on inflation published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In 2010, recipients did not receive a COLA. 2011 marks the first time Social Security beneficiaries have not received an increase in consecutive years since the program began automatically adjusting for inflation 30 years ago.

Social Security benefit levels are modest – only \$14,000 a year for the average retiree. The median income for senior households is just \$24,000, reflecting just how much Social Security means to most elderly Americans. Six in ten seniors rely on Social Security for more than half of their income, and about a third of retirees have little other than Social Security on which to live.

In New York’s 28th Congressional District, over 120,000 people received Social Security benefits last year, including over 77,000 seniors and nearly 13,000 children who received benefits because a family member has retired, become disabled, or passed away.

Slaughter is a cosponsor of H.R. 5987, the Seniors Protection Act, which would provide the \$250 payment to about 54 million Americans currently receiving Social Security benefits and is scheduled to be brought to the House for a vote after the election.